

DE LA BARRA TELLS ATTITUDE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, in Guarded Language, Addresses Chamber of Deputies.

DISTRUST OF AMERICAN MOTIVES IS MANIFESTED

Special Correspondence

Mexico City, Mexico, April 26.—Minister of Foreign Relation Francisco de la Barra presented himself Thursday afternoon in the chamber of deputies to answer the interpellation that had been formulated on the previous day in regard to the peace negotiations with the rebels and the present state of Mexico's international relations, particularly her relations with the United States.

A full attendance of members had gathered to listen to the minister's statement and all the spaces allotted to the public were crowded to their capacity.

The statement of Mr. de la Barra was listened to with the deepest interest and when he concluded expressions of approval of the drift and sentiments of the report were manifested.

After an exordium consisting of pertinent remarks on current events Mr. de la Barra said:

"The chamber was pleased to direct that I should report in regard to the peace negotiations between the government and the rebels. I must begin by declaring that the executive did not initiate those negotiations,

but the government, through my department, endeavored to secure compliance with the neutrality laws of the United States, which frequently were not enforced by some minor officials of the American government, who thus were acting a variance with the usage of international law and the obligations which the friendship prevailing between the two countries required."

Enforcement of Neutrality Laws.

I must mention in this part of my exposition the orders given by the American government, in a spirit of friendliness to Mexico through its ambassadors, by some of the functionaries charged with their execution for the strict application of the laws which prohibit the organization of armed bands against the government, a friendly power and the crossing into it of the smuggling of arms and ammunition intended for the insurgents.

Recent Events.

I come now to the present time when a series of incidents have strongly aroused public opinion in the two countries.

The representations made by the American embassy in Mexico, looking to the due protection of the lives and properties of American citizens in the republic, in connection with the present revolt, have received every attention on the part of the Mexican government, which has promised adequate and immediate protection and has made good those promises according to the requirements of international law.

In some of the cases brought to the notice of my department there has seemed to be no sufficient ground for the fears expressed by the petitioners or for the statements made. In every case however the negotiations have been inspired by sentiments of mutual consideration.

Insurgents in Lower California.

I will here mention briefly certain incidents connected with the entry of insurgents of American nationality into Lower California. The publication in newspapers of New York and San Francisco of advertisements calling for recruits to join an expedition of which the object was to found a model republic in Lower California, gave rise to the apprehension that the government of the United States was called by the government of Mexico, was followed by overt acts. A group of insurgents crossed the border and without any connection with groups of rebels in other parts of the country, began committing acts of depredation, leading the American government to ask for leave to send troops through our territory to protect the dykes that are being built along the Colorado river and which were threatened by the insurgents. Our government, not only bearing in mind the constitutional precedents on the subject, but moved by considerations of national dignity, which you will duly appreciate, answered that it would protest the works in question itself and if this had been done in order to learn the real motive for the order which had had reason produced a deep impression not yet effaced, both in the country to our north and in our own. In that interview as well as in subsequent ones which I had the honor of having with the supreme magistrate of the neighboring nation, President Taft, was pleased to inform me that the reason which had guided him in giving the order in question, as he had by telegraph communicated to the American embassy in Mexico, in order that it might so inform our chancery, was to demonstrate the efficiency of the American army, and so refute the attacks of which it had been the object, by causing it to prevent the passage of adventurers across our border, as well as the smuggling in of arms and other acts which fall under the ban of the body of law known in the United States as the neutrality statutes. But later, on hearing of the order given by the American government for the departure of various warships en route to our ports, I hastened to inquire of the state department how liable under the circumstances such an order was to create difficulties, and President Taft, reiterating his sentiments of friendliness to Mexico and his desire to avoid anything that might be a cause of friction between the two countries, kindly cancelled this order, thus giving proofs of an elevated and conciliatory disposition.

Another Motive.

More recent declarations made through the press have shown that, in addition to the motives stated by President Taft for the mobilization of forces, there existed another connected with the sedition movement which had unhappily broken out in our country. The magnitude of American interests in Mexico, in the shape of industrial and commercial enterprises of every sort, and the large number of American citizens settled in our country, were considerations that also had something to do, it seems, with the mobilization of troops along the frontier. I therefore had new interviews and took other ways of showing the bad impression which the mobilization had produced and would produce in the Mexican people and the dangers which it entailed.

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Finally, my department stated that the government of Mexico deplored the death of the individuals wounded in the projectiles of the rebels and that it would repeat its instructions to our federal forces to take care not to fire in the direction of the terrain or our neighbor.

The negotiations on this matter cannot cause any friction between the two governments or the two countries, because their chancelleries are inspired by a sincere desire to clarify the points at issue and to ascertain the truth in which both are interested.

Supplies for Government Forces.

One subject-matter of extended and delicate exchanges has arisen from the obstacles which some minor American authorities have opposed to the passage of provisions and warlike supplies across the border for the needs of our forces. The action of our embassy has been attended with favorable results, though not in every case. My department continues to uphold the principles of international law which justify our stand.

General Considerations.

Having thus concluded my statement of facts, in so far as it is necessary to enable congress and the country to form an idea of the principal factors in the grave problem which confronts us, I must enter on certain brief considerations, the importance of which will not escape the penetration of the chamber.

The moment is one of importance in our national life. Though the definite and friendly declarations of the president of the United States may tranquillize public sentiment in Mexico, the fact remains that a numerous army corps abundantly supplied with the elements of war is stationed near our border. We should not try to minimize the gravity of the situation for though the spirit of the two governments is friendly and cordial, an unfortunate incident might unexpectedly give rise to a conflict.

It is to be hoped that the turn of affairs in Mexico, the good sense and patriotism of our people and the spirit of justice inspiring the two governments will cause the early disappearance of the clouds which now darken our horizon. The course of the executive, firm, prudent and patriotic, which it has been the duty of the government of the United States to call, was followed by overt acts. A group of insurgents crossed the border and without any connection with groups of rebels in other parts of the country, began committing acts of depredation, leading the American government to ask for leave to send troops through our territory to protect the dykes that are being built along the Colorado river and which were threatened by the insurgents. 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